

DESERT QUEEN RANCH, STOREHOUSE  
Joshua Tree National Monument  
Twentynine Palms Vic.  
San Bernardino County  
California

HABS NO. CA-2347-B

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Building Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
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# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## DESERT QUEEN RANCH--STOREHOUSE (William F. Keys Ranch--Storehouse)

HABS No. CA-2347-B

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**Location:** Joshua Tree National Monument, Twentynine Palms vicinity, San Bernardino County, California.

**Present owner:** National Park Service; Joshua Tree National Monument.

**Present Occupant:** Unoccupied.

**Present Use:** Restoration of site; occasional summer tours.

**Significance:** The Keys Desert Queen Ranch in the Joshua Tree National Monument is an outstanding historical site of desert-based vernacular technologies displaying a range of architectural and engineering artifacts associated with the Euro-American era of settlement in the Mojave desert. The site is largely intact with nine buildings and four ore mills surviving. The storehouse was erected in the 1950s as a store for dry goods and a museum shop selling Indian artifacts and collectible rocks.

### **PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

#### **A. Physical History:**

1. **Date of erection:** 1958.
2. **Original and subsequent owners:** William Keys.
3. **Builders, suppliers:** William Keys.
4. **Original plans and construction:** constructed from available scavenged materials.

#### **B. Historical Information:**

For more information on the Desert Queen Ranch, see HABS No. CA-2347.

In the 1950s Frances Keys wanted to start a store at the ranch to sell food and cool drinks to people passing by. She got a permit and stocked it with Loma Linda foods. She didn't sell soda-pop at the store because she didn't think it was good for the kids. Although, it was

**DESERT QUEEN RANCH--STOREHOUSE**  
**HABS No. CA-2347-B (Page 2)**

consumed at the ranch by the family. Frances also sold rock collections--small specimens glued onto cotton and then put into a small box with explanations in it.<sup>1</sup>

**PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**A. General Statement:**

1. **Architectural character:** The building consists of a stone wall below the window sill line, with unfinished vertical wood siding above. It has a shed roof. Walls are of random-width 1" boards. It has a dirt floor.
2. **Condition of fabric:** in good condition. Currently used as a museum for some of the artifacts found at the ranch.

**B. Description of Exterior:**

1. **Overall dimensions:** 13'-3" by 12'-10"
2. **Foundations:** A stone wall, varying from 1'-6" to 2' in height, serves as its foundation.
3. **Walls:** Of wood boards of various widths
4. **Structural system, framing:** Wood frame.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** One door made by hand of various widths of board (3/4" thick, 4"-5 1/2" wide) nailed into a thick frame of rails and stiles 3 1/2" x 1 1/2".
  - b. **Windows and shutters:** Four windows, all of awning type, opening inside.
6. **Roof:** Sloping shed roof covered with asphalt paper with patches of fiberglass cloth.

**C. Description of Interior:**

1. **Floor Plans:** One room.
2. **Flooring:** Dirt floor.

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<sup>1</sup>Phyllis Keys Meidell, daughter of William and Frances Keys, interviewed by Richard Vidutis in Hesperia, CA, August 24-25, 1993, tape 7A; Willis Keys, son of William and Frances Keys, interviewed by Richard Vidutis at Joshua Tree National Monument, July 8-9, 1993, and at North Fork, CA, July 16-18, 1993, tape 2A.

**DESERT QUEEN RANCH--STOREHOUSE**  
**HABS No. CA-2347-B (Page 3)**

3.     **Wall and ceiling finish:** Exposed rafters and roof boards.
4.     **Hardware:** Hinges on the door are placed on the stile and frame, not mortised.

**PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

See Desert Queen Ranch, HABS No. CA-2347.

**PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

See Desert Queen Ranch, HABS No. CA-2347.